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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV ET

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: EU ELECTION EXPLORATORY MISSION TO  
ARRIVE IN FEBRUARY 2010

Classified By: Classified by CDA Roger A. Meece for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

**¶1.** (C) The European Commission plans to send an exploratory mission to evaluate the prospects for fielding a team to observe the 2010 Ethiopian parliamentary elections, but will not do so until February 15, 2010. In a November 12 meeting, First Counsellor and Head of the Political and Information Section Rene Milas of the European Commission told Deputy Pol/Econ Counselor and Consular Chief that the European Commission had responded on November 6 to the Government of Ethiopia's (GoE) October 8 Note Verbal issuing an invitation to observe the elections (Post will forward a scanned copy of this response to the Desk). The letter said the EU planned to send an exploratory mission, but did not mention explicit timing. When queried about the late timing of the exploratory mission, only three months before the election, Milas said the EC believed it was plenty of time. He commented that even if the exploratory mission recommended against sending an observation mission, the recommendation could be overruled in Brussels.

**¶2.** (C) Milas said the observation mission for the 2005 election was 150 people with 50 "long term" observers and 100 "short term" observers who arrived just to watch the voting. The EU spent approximately three million Euros to fund that observation mission. He stated that the EU was prepared to spend a similar amount to fund a comparable mission for next year's election.

MEECE